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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 001402

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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EUR/WE, EUR/PRA AND ISN/RA:RMONGIELLO

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [TRGY](#) [ENRG](#) [EMIN](#) [ETTC](#) [IR](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: PREVENTING IRAN'S ACQUISITION
OF URANIUM

REF: STATE 91530

Classified By: POL Counselor Richard Eason, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) On September 9 Poloff delivered reftel points regarding prevention of Iran's acquisition of uranium to Werner Bauens, Director of the Non-Proliferation and Export Controls Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Bauens noted that Belgium is not a producer of uranium, but admitted that Belgian companies may be involved in uranium trade as brokers or other types of middlemen. He said that the GOB understands the importance of controlling official exports of uranium ore to Iran, and works with the IAEA to that end. Poloff called attention to the UNSC resolutions and NSG guidelines mentioned in reftel non-paper which provide a legal basis for action by the GOB in appropriate cases.

¶2. (C) Having taken the point about overt shipments, Bauens said that the GOB is more concerned about clandestine shipments of uranium to Iran, destined for clandestine nuclear facilities in that country. He recalled that a shipment of uranium produced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) had been stopped in an African port in the recent past, and was suspected of being headed for Iran. The GOB is working with the IAEA to monitor and share information about such shipments. It is also prepared to cooperate with the United States and other partners to address the issue.

¶3. (C) Bauens continued that the Chinese are actively exploiting DRC's mineral wealth, hoping for short-term profits. He advocated engaging the Chinese in efforts to control uranium smuggling from the DRC. The West should not regard China as an adversary but as a partner in such efforts, he added. Drawing on Belgium's experience with the Congolese, he said, China should be warned that there is little reason to trust partners who have been paid off to permit quick profits and persuaded that normal, transparent business practices are more beneficial in the long run. He regretted that Belgium's current relationship with the DRC government is cold and diminishes Belgian influence on such issues as uranium smuggling. He recommended development of plurilateral fora for engaging the DRC. One of the most pressing issues, he believes, is cleanup and removal of poorly guarded fuel rods still stored at a disused research reactor in Kinshasa.

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